



# South Mecklenburg

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**A Service of Worship**

**Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

**January 28, 2024**

**10:10 a.m., Sanctuary & Livestreamed**

## **We Gather**

**Prelude**                      *Voluntary on "Down Ampney"*                      John G. Barr

**Welcome and Concerns of the Church**                      Dr. Matthew S. Brown

**Introit**                      *Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove*                      John Dykes

**\*Call to Worship**    Maddie Ritchie

One: Blessed is the Lord and blessed are God's people.

**Many: Blessed is our God, and blessed are God's gifts, that grace us  
with forgiveness and every good gift.**

One: Lord, you have come to dwell within us.

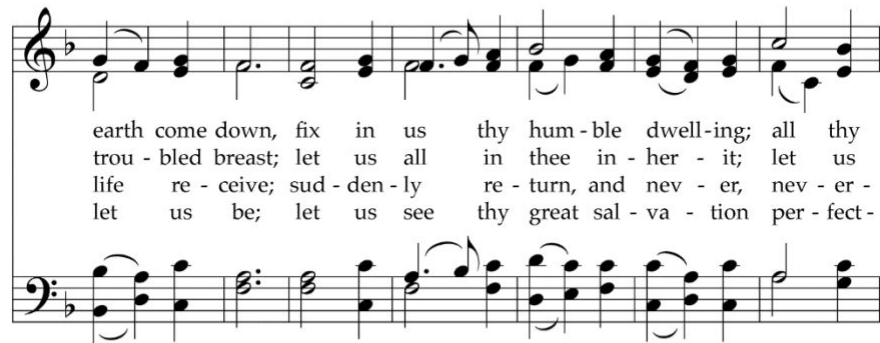
**Many: Build your temple within our hearts.**

**All: Prepare our lives, O God. Help us to be bold proclaimers of  
your love.**

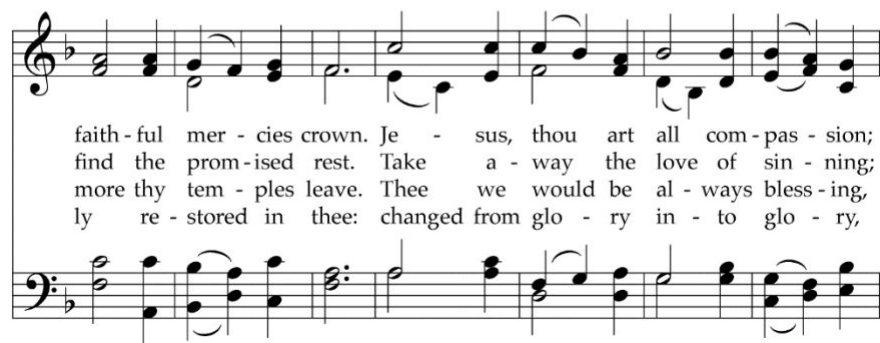
**\*Hymn**                      *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*                      No. 366




1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of heaven, to  
 2 Breathe, O breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to ev - ery  
 3 Come, Al - might - y, to de - liv - er; let us all thy  
 4 Fin - ish then thy new cre - a - tion; pure and spot - less



earth come down, fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing; all thy  
 trou - bled breast; let us all in thee in - her - it; let us  
 life re - ceive; sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er, nev - er -  
 let us be; let us see thy great sal - va - tion per - fect -



faith - ful mer - cies crown. Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion;  
 find the prom - ised rest. Take a - way the love of sin - ning;  
 more thy tem - ples leave. Thee we would be al - ways bless - ing,  
 ly re - stored in thee: changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry,



pure, un - bound - ed love thou art; vis - it us with  
 Al - pha and O - me - ga be; end of faith, as  
 serve thee as thy hosts a - bove, pray, and praise thee  
 till in heaven we take our place, till we cast our



thy sal - va - tion; en - ter ev - ery trem - bling heart.  
 its be - gin - ning, set our hearts at lib - er - ty.  
 with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.  
 crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise.

**Prayer of Confession** (*unison*)

Dr. Whitney Bayer

**Merciful God, in Jesus, we have seen your glory. Yet our sinfulness often blocks out the light of Christ. We are quick to accuse and slow to confess. We find faults easily in others while ignoring our own shortcomings. We have squandered your gifts. We have turned from your ways. We have ignored your Word. Have mercy on us, compassionate God. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. Wash us with your love and cleanse us with your grace that day by day we might move closer to the people you would have us be. Amen.**

**Assurance of God's Grace**

Dr. Bayer

**\*Response of Praise**

No. 582

***Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,  
and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,  
and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.***

## **We Hear and Respond to the Word**

**Church Family Moment**

Rebecca Guzman

1. Listen to [this](#) worship song based on our passage from Malachi. What do the words help you understand about the scripture?
2. Have you ever had to take medicine that tastes really bad? Sometimes, God asks us to do things that might not be very much fun in the moment, but are really best for us. This is why Malachi speaks about God using a refiner's fire. Make a list of things you know are good for you, but you don't like to do.
3. Look up videos of what it is like for precious metals to be refined. [Here](#) is one example. What do you notice about the refining process? How is it like our lives sometimes? How much of the metal was left afterwards? What do you think that means?
4. Journal, considering the following:
  - a. Why would we have to do hard things?
  - b. Remember that God never wants to hurt us. How do you think about that while also thinking about having to do hard things?
  - c. What is the hardest thing you've done? Did you learn anything from it?

**Children's Liturgy**

Rebecca Guzman

*As the children four years old through third grade gather for Children's Worship, the congregation is invited to sing (hymn no. 19):*

***God of great and God of small, God of one and God of all,  
God of weak and God of strong, God to whom all things belong,  
Alleluia, alleluia, praise be to your name.***

**Congregation: God be with you there.**

Children: God be with you here.

*The children will return to join their families following the sermon.*

**Prayer for Illumination**

Dr. Bayer

**First Reading**

Romans 5:1-5

Dr. Bayer

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

**Anthem**

*Behold, A Day is Coming*

Patti Drennan

Chancel Choir; Ann Carney, piano

*Behold, a day is coming when the earth will tremble,  
Behold, a day is coming and there will be no night!  
The Lord will reign as King of kings, the Lord will show His power.  
Behold, a day is coming and Christ will be our light.  
The Lord will lead His people, He speaks and they obey.  
The enemy will falter on that fateful day.  
The Lord will be exalted, the proud will be abased.  
The Lord will reign as King on that glorious day.  
Christ is our salvation, our light!*

**Second Reading**

Malachi 2:17 - 3:4

Dr. Brown

You have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying, "All who do evil are good in the sight of the Lord, and he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?"

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

One: This is the word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**

Refinement

Dr. Brown

**\*The Affirmation of Faith** (*unison*) from The Confession of 1967  
Rev. Lindsey Odom

**The reconciling work of Jesus was the supreme crisis in the life of humankind. His cross and resurrection become personal crisis and**

present hope for women and men when the gospel is proclaimed and believed...

The new life does not release people from conflict with unbelief, pride, lust, and fear. They still have to struggle with disheartening difficulties and problems. Nevertheless, as they mature in love and faithfulness in their life with Christ, they live in freedom and good cheer, bearing witness on good days and evil days, confident that the new life is pleasing to God and helpful to others.

The new life finds its direction in the life of Jesus, his deeds and words, his struggles against temptation, his compassion, his anger, and his willingness to suffer death. The teaching of apostles and prophets guides men and women in living this life, and the Christian community nurtures and equips them for their ministries.

**Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer** Rev. Odom  
... (unison) **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Offertory** *The Gift of Love* arr. Hal Hopson  
Brett Parrish, tenor; Collin Sinclair, tenor

*As an alternative to the traditional offering plate, you may support the ministry of SMPC by giving online at [www.smpchome.org/give](http://www.smpchome.org/give) or texting SMPC to 73256.*

**\*Doxology**

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him,  
all creatures here below; praise him above ye heavenly host;  
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

**\*Prayer of Dedication** Evan Williams  
**Holy God, may what we say reflect your purpose for creation, and what we do be consistent with your will. Receive now what we offer as signs of thanksgiving for all that you have done and continue to do within our lives and in our world today. Amen.**

## **We Go Out to Serve**

**\*Hymn** *Come Down, O Love Divine* No. 282

1 Come down, O Love Di - vine; seek out this soul of mine,  
 2 O let it free - ly burn, till earth - ly pas - sions turn  
 3 And so the yearn - ing strong, with which the soul will long,

and vis - it it with your own ar - dor glow - ing.  
 to dust and ash - es in its heat con - sum - ing.  
 shall far out - pass the power of hu - man tell - ing.

O Com - fort - er, draw near; with - in my heart ap - pear,  
 And let your glo - rious light shine ev - er on my sight,  
 For none can guess God's grace, till Love cre - ates a place

and kin - dle it, your ho - ly flame be - stow - ing.  
 and clothe me round, the while my path il - lum - ing.  
 where - in the Ho - ly Spir - it makes a dwell - ing.

**\*Charge and Benediction**

Dr. Brown

**\*Congregational Response**

***Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place,***

***I can feel his mighty power and his grace.***

***I can hear the brush of angels' wings, I see glory on each face.***

***Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.***

**Postlude**

*Toccata on "Hyfrydol"*

J. Christopher Pardini

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## Worship Service Notes

### Leading Worship this Morning

Dr. Matthew S. Brown, Pastor

Dr. Whitney Bayer, Associate Pastor

Rev. Lindsey Odom, Associate Pastor of Youth and Missions/Outreach

Zach Bowyer, Director of Music and Organist

Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation

Chancel Choir

Ann Carney, piano

Collin Sinclair, Brett Parrish, soloists

Maddie Ritchie, Evan Williams, liturgists

**Acolyte:** Holden Conway

**A/V Team:** Chris Wilcox, Joe Wilcox

**Ushers:** Andrew Brown, George Elledge, Mary Elledge, Curtis Guy, Kara Guy, Jim Williams

**Welcome Team:** Kathy Rasimas, Chad, Allison, and Zac Reeves

The flowers in worship this morning are given by Dave, Terry, Natalie and Eric Gaines to the glory of God and in memory of Edith and Howard Gaines.

Welcome to South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church! If you are joining us in person or online, are a first-time visitor, a long-term member, or anything in between, we are glad that you are worshiping with us and we want to stay connected with you. To receive our [emails](#), sent on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, contact Nancy Metzler, Director of Hospitality and Connection, [nancy@smpchome.org](mailto:nancy@smpchome.org). These emails contain a weekly devotion and information about upcoming worship services and church activities. Also, find us on Facebook: [@southmecklenburgpresbyterian](#) and Instagram: [@southmeckpres](#).

A note to parents: We are so delighted that you and your children are here! Children are an integral part of our faith community, and we strive to support parents during worship. Here are some helpful things to know:

- Children are welcome in worship. We understand that means wiggles!
- We provide blue worship totes in the Narthex to help children engage in worship. Please return the totes after the service.
- There is a nursery located in the Palmer Building with dedicated staff who are happy to keep your infant – three-year-old safe.
- Children's Worship is provided for children ages 4 through 3rd grade. The children gather after the Church Family Moment and return after the sermon.
- A glider and changing table are available in Room 301 for mothers who wish to have privacy while nursing.

- During worship, the service is broadcast to the parlor, where there is more space to move around if your little one becomes restless.

Interested in joining South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church? Our Session will gather to welcome new members today at 11:30 a.m. To learn more, contact Nancy Metzler, Director of Hospitality and Connection, [nancy@smpchome.org](mailto:nancy@smpchome.org) or 980-265-2839.

### **Congregational Notes** (as of January 25, 2024)

#### **Remember in Prayer**

- Dotty Dysard, as she recovers from surgery.
- All those caught in the crossfire of warfare in Israel and Gaza.
- All those affected by the conflict in Ukraine.
- Our mission partners in Bayonnais, Haiti.

To join the prayer chain or send a prayer request:

[prayer@SMPChome.org](mailto:prayer@SMPChome.org).



## **South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church**

8601 Bryant Farms Road, Charlotte, NC 28277, 704-544-0404

PO Box 79321, Charlotte, NC 28271

[smpchome.org](http://smpchome.org)





## WELCOME!

After worship, we hope you'll join us for lemonade and cookies in Coffee Grounds, located in the narthex. Come meet friends old and new! Registry pads are located on your pew. Please sign and pass to your neighbor and perhaps speak to someone you haven't met!

### THIS WEEK'S CLASSES & EVENTS

today  
**JAN. 28**  
after  
worship

#### **Columbarium Drop-In Information Session Parlor**

For the next two Sundays, Columbarium Committee members will be in the parlor following worship to give more information and answer questions. You can also find columbarium details on our website or via the QR code. Contact: Charlie Metzler, charlesmetzler@carolina.rr.com.



today  
**JAN. 28**  
2:00 p.m. -  
4:00 p.m.

#### **Youth Ice Skating**

**Extreme Ice Center, 4705 Indian Trail Fairview Rd, Indian Trail, NC 28079, Middle and High Schoolers**

Meet us for a fun afternoon of ice skating! Cost is \$18 (includes skate rental). Please bring additional money if you would like concessions. Register on Realm. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

tuesday  
**JAN. 30**  
10:00 a.m.

#### **Handiworkers Group Room 104, Palmer Building**

Knitters, needlepointers, quilters, cross-stitchers and crocheters are invited - all levels! Contact: Judy Jameson, jgjameson@gmail.com.

wednesday  
**JAN. 31**  
9:30 a.m.

#### **Conversations with Matt Brown McQueen Room and Zoom**

We will discuss the scripture for the coming week's sermon. Contact: Matt Brown for the Zoom ID#, matt@smpchome.org.

friday  
**FEB. 2**  
7:30 a.m. -  
8:30 a.m.

#### **Friday Morning Men's Group Chapel 206**

The group meets on the first and third Fridays of every month. They are reading the book *The Fourth Quarter of Your Life: Embracing What Matters Most* by Matthew Kelly. All are welcome. Contact: Curt Ireland, irelandcurtis00@gmail.com.

sunday  
**FEB. 4**  
times vary

#### **Room in the Inn Sardis Presbyterian Church**

Various volunteer and donations spots are still open for Feb. 4, Feb. 21 and March 13. Sign up via QR code. Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.



sunday  
**FEB. 4**  
9:00 a.m. -  
10:00 a.m.

#### **Adult Bible Study: Invitation to the Old Testament McQueen Room and Zoom**

Hear the story of God and God's calling of the people of Israel through the many voices of the biblical text. Please register on Realm. Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.



## UPCOMING EVENTS



**Lunch Bunch, Friday, February 9, 11:15 a.m., Narthex** - Join us for a first person historical presentation of Martha Washington by Nora Brooks followed by a delicious catered lunch. Cost is \$8 per person. Please register on Realm by Tuesday, February 6. All are welcome. Contact: Ruth Ann Engle, raengle22@gmail.com.

**Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Tuesday, February 13, 5:30-7:00 p.m., Mecklenburg Hall** - Bring your family and friends for a pancake feast! We will enjoy fellowship time as we prepare to journey through the Lenten season together. We will collect food donations to support our Center of Hope ministry: pancake mix, syrup, Tang drink mix and quick grits. \$5/person (maximum family cost of \$20) will defray meal costs. Register on Realm. Contact: Nancy Metzler, nancy@smpchome.org.



### Ash Wednesday, February 14

**Drive Through Ashes, 7:30-9:15 a.m., Church Parking Lot**

**Ash Wednesday Worship Service, 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary and Livestream**

**Hops and Vine Around Town, Saturday, February 17, 4:00-6:00 p.m. Open Tap, 5010 Carmel Center Drive** - All are invited to join us for fellowship! Contact: Frank Graham, Frank.Graham@forvis.com.



**Parents Morning Out, Saturday, February 24, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.** - We invite all children ages 3 to 5th grade to join us for a fun-filled morning. We will play games, create crafts, watch a Bible story movie, and enjoy a delicious snack. The cost for each child to participate is \$10, which will cover the materials needed for the activities. We look forward to having a great time together! Contact: Rebecca Guzman, rebecca@smpchome.org.

## OF NOTE

**Registration for the 2024-25 school year at SMPC Preschool is now open.** The preschool provides a loving and nurturing learning environment for children ages 2 through TK. Please contact SMPC Preschool Director Tammy Winchip, tammy@smpchome.org, to schedule a tour or receive more information. More information can also be found at [smppreschool.org](http://smppreschool.org).



**Support SMPC Youth by purchasing a SMPC t-shirt!** Short sleeve or long sleeve options are available, and the back has a beautiful picture of the church. Funds go to the SMPC Youth program and youth trips. The deadline to order t-shirts is Sunday, February 18. We can't wait to proudly wear these around town! Contact: Lindsey Odom, lindsey@smpchome.org.

**Registration for Montreat's Women's Connection 2024 opens Thursday, February 1.** Spots typically fill up fast! The conference will be August 9-11 with keynote speaker Becca Stevens, a nonprofit leader. We encourage SMPC women of all ages (and their friends!) to register. Contact: Whitney Bayer, whitney@smpchome.org.



## SMPC 2023 Highlights & Annual Financial Report